

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 1057

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PEPR, MU, XF
SUBJECT: VIEW OF OMANI OFFICIAL ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. DURING A JULY 26 CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE, FOREIGN
MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY YUSUF AL-ALAWI OFFERED SOME RATHER
PESSIMISTIC VIEWS OF THE RECENT EVENTS IN ADEN AND THEIR
IMPLICATIONS FOR OMAN. HIS OPINIONS ARE OF INTEREST NOT
ONLY BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENTIAL POSITION HE HOLDS IN FOREIGN
POLICY BUT ALSO BECAUSE HE TYPIFIES IN MANY WAYS THE
K
ND OF YOUNG, ACTIVE OFFICIAL DOMINATING THE UPPER-MIDDLE
OMANI BUREAUCRACY. HIS REMARKS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

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(A) THE POLITICAL SYSTEM SYMBOLIZED BY THE CURRENT PDY
REGIME AND THE SYSTEM THAT PREVAILS IN THE REST OF THE
ARABIAN PENINSULA CANNOT COEXIST. THERE WILL BE A CON-
FRONTATION SOMEDAY. IN OMAN, THE CONFRONTATION MAY TAKE
THE FORM OF A RENEWAL OF THE DHOFAR INSURGENCY. HOWEVER,
OMAN IS PROBABLY NOT THE FIRST TARGET. NOT YEMEN LOOKS
LIKE IT WILL BE THE FIRST VICTIM OF PDY AGGRESSIVENESS.

OMA WILL MOST LIKELY HAVE A BREATHING SPELL BEFORE IT
COMES UNDER THE THREAT, OUT IZ IS NEXT ON THE LIST.

(B) ASKED WHAT OMAN AND
ITS NEIGHBORS ARE DOING TO COUNTER-
ACT THIS PERCEIVED DANGER, ALAWI SHRUGGED AND SAID THERE
WAS LITTLE THEY COULD DO. IF THE PDRY WERE THE SOLE
THREAT, OR EVEN THE SOLE THREAT WITH ITS REGIONAL ALLIES
LIKE ETHIOPIA, THEN EFFECTIVE ACTION WOULD BEE TAKEN ON A
REGIONAL LEVEL. BUT THE PDRY IS BACKED BY A SUPERPOWER
&
THE SOVIET UNION. OMAN CANNOT COPE WITH THAT; ONLY THE
UNITED STATES CAN DO SO. YET THE USG IS NOT HELPING OMAN
VERY MUCH. Z EVERYTIME WE ASK FOR ARMS, YOU SAY NO."#\$

2. COMMENT: ALAWI'S PESSIMISM MAY HAVE BEEN A BIT
EXAGGERATED FOR EFFECT ON HIS USG LISTMNYR, BUT WE BELIEVE
IT REFLECTS QUITE ACCURATELY THE FRUSTRATION WHICH THOUGHT-
FUL OMANIS FEEL OVER A LONG-TERM TRENDS IN THE AREA. AS
THEY SEE IT, THEIR ADVERSARIES SEEM TO GET ALL THE SUPPORT
NEEDED FOR AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS, WHILE THE POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS
ON THE FRIENDLY SIDE KEEP TURNING AWAY FROM THE PROBLEM.
THERE IS PROBAYWY A LOT THAT OMAN AND ITS NEIGHBORS COULD
DO TO HELP THEMSELVES IN THEIR PLIGHT, BUT UNTIL THE
FRAMEWORK OF A WORLD-WIDE RESPONSE IS CLEAR, THEY ARE
RELUCTANT TO STICK THEIR NECKS OUT.
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